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BRINKMANSHIP IN WEST GERMANY

GDR Proposes Quick Steps Against Nuclear Arms

The West German policy of driving towards the brink of war could lead to a catastrophe for the German people and the world, Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, warned in a letter to West German Chancellor Adenauer on January 26th.

In his letter Walter Ulbricht stated: "I cannot believe that you are really ready to take the chance of nuclear war on German soil... and I would like to assume that it is not completely impossible for us to reach agreement on certain basic questions which affect all Germans."

The GDR statesman stressed that West Germany was not threatened in any way by the socialist countries. None of the socialist countries had any frontier claims against Germany; nobody had demanded that capitalism should be abolished in West Germany by outside interference. He suggested that an all-German plebiscite should be held on total disarmament and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany.

"If you refuse to negotiate with the GDR this can only be because you wish to hold your hands free for military aggression" the letter said. "When we take into account the fact that your policies are largely being carried out by people who already carried them out under Hitler, you need not be surprised if people in the GDR and other countries watch every step of yours with great distrust."

Walter Ulbricht stated that the atomic war buildup in West Germany would inevitably force the GDR to take protective measures: "If the Government of the West German Federal Republic does not stop arming with atom weapons within a short period, the Government of the GDR will be forced to take appropriate defensive measures and request its allies to put rocket weapons at its disposal."

(The text of the Ulbricht—Adenauer letter, slightly condensed for reasons of space, is printed inside this issue.)

At a press conference in East Berlin on January 28th, Walter Ulbricht proposed that representatives of the governments of the two German states should meet in Berlin within the following fourteen days to begin negotiations on the following subjects:

1. The ending of the cold war.
2. Renunciation of nuclear arms in both German states.
3. An arms stop.
4. Renunciation of rocket bases on German territory.
5. A non-aggression pact between the two German states.
6. The strength and stationing of the armed forces of the two German states.

Political observers in Berlin pointed out that the two German states could negotiate without becoming involved in the complicated problem of attempting to find a solution of the German problem as a whole. Agreement on these military points would, however, provide a more favourable basis for further negotiations on German Confederation, the conclusion of a peace treaty, and the eventual re-unification of Germany.

Walter Ulbricht's Letter to Konrad Adenauer

I am writing to you because of the swing in world politics away from the cold war in the direction of peaceful co-existence, and because of the fact that we Germans must make a contribution to the relaxation of international tension.

I must state quite frankly that I have no illusions about your policy to date and the aims of the government which you head. The clouds of national catastrophe have been gathering over Germany ever since the leading political forces in West Germany, under your leadership, created the separate currency (in 1948), founded the West Zonal state (in 1949), and began to re-arm.

Our Proposals

As long ago as 1950 we proposed to you the establishment of an All-German Council and the preparation of a peace treaty, since there is no other way to reach re-unification. Unfortunately you even rejected at that time proposals for the joint preparation of all-German free and democratic elections, since you believed that you could force the annexation of the German Democratic Republic by a policy of re-armament and military pressure.

You replied to our proposals for a peaceful solution of the German problem by arbitrarily signing the Paris agreements incorporating West Germany in NATO, thus tearing Germany apart.

In the past years, and in particular during the last year, the leadership of the Christian Democratic Union has sacrificed every chance of re-unifying Germany and every possibility of international relaxation with its short-sighted policy of re-armament and revenge. You will have noticed that this policy has led to an increasing isolation of West Germany.

I am naturally not writing to you because I am worried about the international isolation of your government ... But since you and your party leadership today exercise power in West Germany, you are the person I have to address. I am doing this because I feel I must try every method to prevent you, and the members of your party, from taking a path which is so dangerous for the national interests of the German people and for the peace of Europe ...

It would obviously be a waste of time for us to try to convert each other with regard to our political aims: but I would like to assume that it is not completely impossible for us to reach a measure of agreement on certain basic questions which affect all Germans.

I mean, for example, the question of the continued existence of the German nation, which is endangered by your policy, and I mean in particular the question of preventing a nuclear conflict on German soil ...

I cannot believe that you are really ready to take the chance of a nuclear war on German soil, although some of your closest collaborators are obviously ready to take such a chance ...

I believe that everything possible must be done to prevent Germany from becoming, for the third time, the starting point of a world war.

You will tell me that you do not want a war. This is quite possible: past rulers have made the same claim. Even Hitler thought that he could, step by step, subject other countries to the domination of German militarism and fascism without waging war.

Contradiction

But it is a contradiction in terms to speak of peace, and at the same time to press ahead with nuclear armament in West Germany. The German people know from history that arming with the aim of revenge always leads to conflicts and war. This time it would not be a war comparable to former wars ...

At the NATO Ministers' Conference on December 16th 1959, your War Minister Franz Josef Strauss, commenting on the nuclear armament of the West German NATO army and the stationing of nuclear war-heads in West Germany, stated:

"Despite the dense population of the Federal Republic ... we are ready to assume these burdens, and to convince our people of the necessity for accepting the risks involved."

On the instructions of Herr Strauss the West German general staff has already worked out plans for the evacuation of millions of West German citizens. This is madness, but there is method in the madness.

Do you really hold the same opinions, Herr Adenauer?

Are you really ready to advocate to the German people that they should accept the risk of the physical extermination of a large portion of the West German population in a nuclear war on German soil?

I should like to receive a clear answer to these questions, and I think that all Germans in East and West are entitled to demand such a clear answer.

Senseless Story

But please do not reply with the old and senseless story that West German needs atomic arms because it is threatened, because it wants to prevent atomic war by possessing atom bombs. Nobody threatens West Germany. No ordinary person anywhere in the world believes that the Soviet Union or the GDR is a threat to West Germany. If you yourself really believed this, then you could support the proposals for general and complete disarmament made by Premier Khrushchov ... and by helping to prepare a peace treaty with Germany you could propose international guarantees which would guarantee a peaceful future for Germany. Instead of this, you are the only Prime Minister in Europe who makes frontier demands and who calls for revenge.

Neither the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, nor any of the other People's Democracies have made any demands in connection with the German frontiers or the political regime in West Germany. Nobody has demanded that capitalism should be abolished in West Germany through outside interference. It is an internal matter for the West German population to choose their own economic and governmental system ...

In the past, Dr. Adenauer, you have often declared you are in favour of disarmament. I take you at your word.

At the United Nations Premier Khrushchov called for general and complete disarmament. When leading statesmen take the first steps towards disarmament and the abolition of

foreign bases ... Is it not time that the initiative for disarmament should be taken in Germany? ...

Could not both German states reach an agreement on the holding of a plebiscite on total disarmament and the conclusion of a peace treaty on the basis of the United Nations Charter?

We are very sorry to see, Herr Adenauer, that you devote so much energy to re-armament, while declaring at the same time that you are in favour of disarmament.

Why are you speeding up re-armament and hindering the discussions being conducted between the Great Powers in preparation for the Summit Conference?

Why are you not ready to renounce atomic arms for West Germany?

Why do you disregard the democratic right of the people to take a decision against nuclear arms by means of a free plebiscite?

Why do you refuse an arms stop?

Why are you not ready to conclude an agreement between the two German states on the strength, the armament and the stationing of military forces? ...

If you really do not want to see nuclear war on German soil, then demonstrate this by deeds, and see to it that all forms of nuclear weapons are banished from German soil. Pious words are not enough: only facts are convincing ...

The historic struggle between the reactionary and progressive forces in Germany have resulted in the establishment of two German states.

One state embodies the traditions of German militarism and the policy of revenge.

The other state embodies the best humanist traditions of the German people, and the implementation of the aims of the German workers' movement ...

No Argument

I shall not argue with you as to which is the legitimate German state, that is to say the state which represents the real national interests of the German people. The legitimate German state can only be the state which struggles, in the spirit of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, against any revival of German militarism and fascism, and which seeks to reunite our homeland by means of the conclusion of a peace treaty.

I quite grasp your wish that there should be no such state as the German Democratic Republic. After all, the existence of the GDR is the greatest obstacle to the resumption of the old German imperialist policy of robbery and conquest.

What "The Times" Says

West German propagandists attempted to counter Walter Ulbricht's letter by claiming that nuclear weapons are today stationed in the German Democratic Republic. This is what "The Times", London, had to say on the subject on January 28th:

"The Bundeswehr (West German army) is being steadily equipped with an armoury of rockets and fighter-bombers capable of delivering nuclear warheads. The Soviet forces in east Germany are not, so far as is known, equipped with nuclear weapons, nor have rocket basis been established there in spite of western German reports. The east German armed forces number 90,000 men, compared with the Bundeswehr's 200,000, and are equipped only with conventional weapons."

But you should realise that it is senseless to refuse to recognise the existence of facts which everyone can see. I do not believe that you would be stupid enough to refuse to recognise the existence of a rock on which you had just bumped your nose ...

Your claim that you cannot negotiate with the GDR because this would give support to "an impossible theory of the existence of two states" is simply empty words. This is not a question of theories but rather of recognising the fact that as a result of the Hitlerite war and the struggle to liquidate militarism and fascism in Germany, two states have come into being.

If you refuse to negotiate with the GDR this can only be because you wish to hold your hands free for military aggression, that is to say for war. We have full knowledge of the plans of your War Minister to speed up atomic armament, and then launch a blitzkrieg (lightning war) against the GDR.

You know, just as well as I do, that the 1959 manoeuvres in West Germany included exercises with this aim ... These war plans are the reason why you are laying down a barrage against the preparations for the Summit Conference.

You should not assume that we put any trust in your use of peaceful words, so long as the facts speak a different language.

The German people have bitter experience of such misuse of peaceful words ... The Hitler regime spoke most loudly of peace when it was ready to attack other countries ... I am sure that you know Hitler's recipe, which went something like this:

First speak only of peace, in order to re-arm: suppress the opposition, or break its back so that it does not dare to oppose: nurture feelings of revenge, and make propaganda for the targets to be conquered, at the same time swearing that only peaceful means will be used: finally, when you are fully armed, make psychological preparations for the use of force, for war.

Do you not find, Herr Adenauer, that your government has taken over this programme rather shamelessly?

First you spoke only of peace, and even said that you wished your hand might wither if it ever again took up arms.

Then you pushed ahead feverishly with re-armament, to an accompaniment of peace sermons; at this period you rejected even the thought of nuclear weapons for the West German NATO army.

Then came the policy of nuclear armament, accompanied by the banning of the Communist Party and the persecution of democratic organisations.

At the same time the ideas of revenge were nurtured, and the targets for conquest were proclaimed, coupled with promises that only peaceful methods would be used ...

But the nearer you got to a completion of your arms programme — your aim is apparently to be ready at the end of 1961 or in 1962 — the more intensive became the internal terror against all supporters of peace and opponents of atomic war, and the more intensive became the psychological preparation of the West German population for the changeover to the open use of force ...

Race Hatred

Your policy of revenge naturally brings with it a development of the fascist ideology of race hatred and anti-Semitism. I know that you are opposed to the swastika. The old Hitler officers are also opposed to the swastika because it was under this symbol that Germany was led to defeat ...

Unavoidably, many people in West Germany who do not understand your tactics so well feel themselves encouraged in their revengeful policies and do not bother to hide their true colours, their feelings of German militarism and their race hatred.

When we take into account the fact that your policies are largely being carried out by people who already carried them out under Hitler, then you need not be surprised if people in the GDR and people and governments in other countries watch every

The Man Who Got the Letter

Dr Konrad Adenauer, West German Chancellor, Chairman of the Christian Democratic Union

Adenauer was born in 1876 in Cologne. He studied Law and Economics at universities in Munich, Freiburg and Bonn, and practiced law for four years. In 1906 he became an official of Cologne city government and in 1917 Lord Mayor of Cologne.

From 1920 till 1932 he was President of the Prussian State Council and was a member of the Reich Executive Committee of the Centre Party. After Hitler's rise to power Adenauer was removed from his official posts but from 1936–1945 he received his full pension of about £ 1000 a year. On three occasions he was imprisoned for short periods. During the war he employed French slave labourers to work in his garden.

After the war he became Lord Mayor of Cologne again, but was removed by the British occupation authorities for inefficiency.

In 1946 he became Chairman of the Christian Democratic Union in the British Occupation Zone and later Chairman for the whole of West Germany. In 1949 the first West German Parliament elected him Chancellor by a majority of one – his own vote. He was re-appointed 1953 and 1957.

On January 22nd 1960 at an audience with the Pope in Rome, he stated: "I think that God has given the German people a special task in these stormy times – to be a guardian for the West against those powerful influences which are brought to bear on us from the East."

step of yours with great distrust and take all necessary measures to nip in the bud any new aggression on the part of German imperialism or, in the case of those governments close to your own, to see that they are not dragged by you into any suicidal adventure.

You always reject indignantly any comparison of your policies with those of the Hitler Government. You stress that you yourself were not a supporter of Hitler and that you even had certain conflicts with the nazi regime. I shall not dispute that. But the fact that you were not an overt Hitler supporter does not stop you from carrying on Hitler's policies of vengeance and conquest though using somewhat different methods and paying some consideration to the completely different international situation.

Fascist restoration and anti-Semitism flourish on the soil of your militarist-clerical regime. This fascist rebirth has already spread to almost all branches of your government apparatus, including the police and the judicial system and also to the schools, colleges and universities, to the field of literature, etc.

Your government can certainly claim no credit for not having openly praised anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism has brought Germany into such discredit in the past that only the stupidest fascists play this card. But the swastikas on synagogues, the desecrated cemeteries and memorials to victims of the Hitler regime only prove how well these weeds have grown in your allegedly so free and democratic garden.

Your Plans

I must state quite bluntly that the aggressive imperialist and militarist plans employed by you, your government and your General Staff are a threat to the German people's future as a nation.

I am completely unable to understand how you can expect to achieve any kind of success with an aggressive policy of this kind. The ruling circles of Germany have plunged our people into two catastrophic wars. Is it not obvious that Germany can never achieve any progress by means of violence and war?

I have already stated that your plans are well-known, and that not only the GDR but our allies as well are taking all necessary precautionary measures. Since you apparently wish to ignore the warnings of the Soviet Government and of the Government of the German Democratic Republic and to misinterpret our desire for peace, I should like to state frankly:

If the Government of the West German Federal Republic does not stop arming with atom weapons within a short period and does not introduce an arms stop, the Government of the German Democratic Republic will be forced to take appropriate defensive measures and request our allies to put rocket weapons at its disposal. Your atomic war buildup and your policy of revenge are forcing us to take protective measures ...

Modern Rockets

If you cannot be convinced by other arguments, therefore, we hope that the presence of modern rockets on the territory of the German Democratic Republic will help you to realise that all your plans of revenge are destined to fail once and for all.

No thinking person who is able to judge the situation in the world can doubt that within a few minutes after any military attack on the German Democratic Republic, Bonn and various other military centres in your West German state will have ceased to exist.

What do you really expect to achieve with your policy of aggression? Do you really want to speed up the end of capitalist rule in West Germany?

We for our part have no reason to prolong the rule of monopoly capitalism in West Germany or to regret its downfall.

We are not struggling for peace in order to preserve this rule; but we do not want a war. We want to save the German people from the disaster of an atomic war on German soil.

This is why we are discussing this question with you, although we know perfectly well what your plans are. That is why we are trying to get you to change your policy. If humanitarian considerations do not carry much weight with you, then we hope at least that you assess realistically the balance of forces.

My advice to you is to throw your plans for a conquest of the East into the wastepaper basket. You should consider seriously what an atomic inferno your policy would bring to the population of West Germany and to your own children and grandchildren.

Do not play with atomic war. Cancel the decision to arm the West German NATO army with atomic weapons.

Give the people of West Germany the right to decide on the questions of atomic arms and a peace treaty ...

Listen to the voice of reason and abandon your role as eternal troublemaker during the preparations for a summit conference, at the conference itself, and at other international con-

ferences which may follow, conferences which are aimed at understanding and a relaxation of tension. The representatives of the United States have come to understand that a policy based on war means national suicide and that a change-over is necessary to a policy of friendly competition between countries with different social systems; it should be possible for you and your political friends to come to your senses too. Are you so much afraid of a peaceful competition between the two German states that you prefer to plunge our nation into catastrophe?

You assert that we want to establish communism in West Germany by making peace proposals. You have had large posters pasted up in West Germany telling people this. You obviously wanted in this way to divert attention from your own aggressive plans.

Xmas Message

Here in the GDR people were greatly surprised that ... you misused your Christmas message to spoil the holiday season with your untruths, your words of hatred and your threats of aggression. Although you know better, you bear false witness against the GDR with stories about misery, poverty, the suppression of religious services and slavery and then proceed to announce once more your mad plans for "liberation". This can only mean that you have set your course towards war ...

I do not believe that you are so badly informed that your statements about the GDR were made out of ignorance, nor do I hold you for so inexperienced that you do not know the disastrous results of such a policy. You are not a political novice. We can therefore only conclude that when you spread falsehoods about the GDR and other socialist countries you are deliberately sowing hatred in order to prepare the people of West Germany for fratricidal warfare in Germany and for a war of revenge ...

Think of Germany! Help it to use the great chance offered the German people by the summit conference and the international conferences which will probably follow it!

The preliminary exchanges on the disarmament question, the question of a German peace treaty and the question of a peaceful solution to the West Berlin question which were made at the Geneva Conference and during the discussions between Premier Khrushchov and President Eisenhower demonstrate that it is possible to make gradual process by way of mutual understanding. The Soviet Union's proposal for a peace treaty which would permit the German people to achieve reunification on a peaceful and democratic basis accords with the national interests of our people and would make a peaceful future for our nation possible.

Your government is called a troublemaker by the people of other countries because your "policy of strength", which seeks a way out of the present situation in the use of force, is in contradiction to the real relation of forces in the world. You should abandon the bad traditions of revengeful policies and hatred of other peoples and turn instead to the good traditions of our nation, the ideas of humanitarianism and of international friendship. You should help to end the fateful cycle of depression — armament-boom — war — post-war boom — rearmament — war, in which West Germany is still caught up.

The national task facing us is to overcome the contradiction between the peaceful interests of our people and the aggressive militarist plans of certain ruling circles in West Germany. The way to fulfil this task is to follow a policy of relaxing tension, of approaching one another and of reaching mutual understanding between the two German states ...

The GDR, true to its principles, has in the past years always urged a German contribution towards peace. We have endeavoured, and are still endeavouring, to win a peace treaty for Germany, a treaty which would finally, after 15 years, close the books on the war and thus do away with many dangerous explosives which might lead to a new catastrophe.

West Berlin

We demand that West Berlin be changed from a nest of espionage and sabotage, the breeding-place of a new war, into a peaceful Free City of West Berlin, whose inhabitants would themselves decide their own social system. Sooner or later this goal will be achieved — in the interests of the security and freedom of the West Berliners as well as the interests of peace in Europe.

Although you have in the past rejected all our proposals, we have always made every effort to achieve cooperation between the two German states. We have even invited you to visit the German Democratic Republic on the assumption that a return visit to West Germany by Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, might follow. You rejected all these proposals.

You assert that we interfere in West German domestic affairs and intend to bring socialist democracy to West Germany. We have no such intention. We are a part of our peace-loving people and want nothing more than a peaceful future for Germany, a future

The Man Who Wrote the Letter

Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister of the GDR, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party

Ulbricht was born in 1893 in Leipzig into a working-class family; he learnt the trade of cabinet-maker. At the age of 15 he joined the Socialist Youth Movement. In World War I he was conscripted and served a prison term for anti-war agitation.

After the 1918 revolution he was a delegate to the Central Workers and Soldiers Council, and helped form the German Communist Party in Leipzig. He was a Reichstag deputy from 1928 until the Communist Party was outlawed by Hitler in 1933.

After underground work against Hitler inside Germany he was forced to emigrate, and the nazis cancelled his citizenship in 1937. He spent the war years in the Soviet Union and played an active part in the battle against the nazi invasion; at Stalingrad and other battlefields he broadcast across the front lines to the German troops. He was also a leader in the anti-nazi "Free Germany" Committee.

He returned to Germany while the battle for Berlin was still raging, and played a leading part in re-establishing the Communist Party. In 1946 when the Socialist Unity Party was formed by the merger of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, he was elected Deputy Chairman, and later First Secretary.

After the German Democratic Republic was founded in 1949 he became First Deputy Prime Minister in Otto Grotewohl's Cabinet.

only possible in a Germany free of militarism and fascism. As long as atomic rearmament continues and a war of revenge is being planned we are naturally compelled to spread our propaganda for peace in West Germany in order to prevent a war.

We are ready to sign an agreement on mutual non-interference in connection with a treaty prohibiting the use of violence and the creation of an all-German Committee. That would help the two German states to come closer to each other.

I assume that you well understand that, now that rocket technology has reached its current advanced stage, the question of war or peace is in the balance. You know very well that after what your War Minister Strauss has said and in view of the policy of revenge which is being developed in West Germany, you will not be able to assert that you are not responsible for the military provocation in the way you assert that the Bonn Government has nothing to do with the anti-Semitic campaign of the swastika daubers.

Please take the new situation into consideration and think of our people who can only live if there is peace. Think of our homeland which can only be reunified as a peaceful state.

We shall continue to do everything which could lead to a relaxation of tension in Germany, to fight every policy of a militarist or vengeful nature and to explain to the major powers the need for concluding a peace treaty with Germany so that our homeland can be reunified in peace and freedom.

Consider very earnestly whether it would not also be in your best interests if representatives of both German states should take the opportunity as soon as possible to discuss, in an all-German committee established on a basis of parity, how to safeguard peace in Germany, how best to prepare a peace treaty and how, step for step, to overcome the division of Germany.

I hope that this letter will cause you to consider the matter earnestly and that it will serve to bring about a frank, objective discussion on peace or war and about the reunification of our German homeland as a peace-loving democratic and progressive state.

Walter Ulbricht
First Secretary of the
Central Committee of the
Socialist Unity Party
First Deputy Prime Minister
of the GDR

Where is the Real Danger?

W. German Trade Union Journal Gives Answer

(Condensed from an article by Klaus Besser, editor of "Welt der Arbeit", official weekly of the West German Trade Union Federation, January 22nd.)

It is a good, old German custom to put the blame for all one's own sins on other people. With our innocent blue Germanic eyes we look into our garden and lo — everything was always in the best of order. Except for the weeds. But they were planted by the other people, our enemies, the Jews, the Marxists, the English, the French. And after our political stew had turned so poisonous that after having cooked it we got sick on it — then, too, the others were to blame.

And with the same innocent blue eyes, those who survived and those who are recuperating look over their garden fence today and point to the weeds in their neighbour's garden. "Look," they say, "they have weeds, too. How should we get rid of our weeds when the others don't?"

I am exaggerating? Let us read what a major newspaper from the Rhine-Ruhr area wrote about the swastika epidemic of 1960:

"The time has come to speak seriously with those countries friendly to us. The time has also come for Bonn to wake up, because the so-called wave of anti-Semitism is now being followed by something like a wave of anti-Germanism."

How stupid does the writer think the English, the Americans and the French are?

Since the end of the war, 300 of the 1700 Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated. The West German book shops have been flooded with Nazi books. There is an amazing number of Nazi magazines. German nationalist organisations like the "Stahlhelm" (Steel Helmets) are again busy beating their drums, even the SS has got itself organised and Herr Oberlaender is still a member of the Federal Government. Is this list long enough? It is a bald-faced lie to say that the other countries were excited only by the swastika-daubers.

Now comes the really remarkable fact. The quotation above is not from a German nationalist paper, but from a liberal paper. You can imagine what the really nationalist German papers are writing.

The whole German nationalist saga is being printed openly in the Federal Republic again. Note well the term "German nationalist"! I do not say National Socialist. Everybody is against the nazis, of course! Everybody agrees on that, from Herr Schroeder (ex-storm trooper, now Interior Minister, trans.) to the SS. For after all, there were really no nazis in the SS, the SS only wanted to do the "right thing" and only did its "duty". Everybody scolds the neo-nazis, everybody is shocked at the swastikas on the walls, everybody is all for democracy: Abracadabra, all Germans are model democrats, and just a few naughty young lads have spoiled our reputation in other countries.

And if the bad people in other cuntries do not want to believe this Teutonic fable, then it is their own fault. Then we must sulk for a while. We can beat our chests and get very indignant about the Negro problem in the USA, about the war in Algeria and about the many other evils committed by people in other countries.

I am exaggerating again? Look at one of these German nationalist newspapers, the "Stahlhelm", which calls it "a vicious lie" to blame Hitler for World War II:

"... The lie about war guilt is constantly being spread in the press, on the radio, on television and in literature, all kinds of true and alleged atrocities are recalled over and over again and this is done with a definite purpose in mind."

Everything needed by the German nationalist is to be found here: "allegations" of atrocities, the conformist post-war press, the politicians and journalists installed by the Allies. The conclusion: we need a new "respectable" state. On the very next page "Stahlhelm" publishes an

article, called "The Reconstruction of the German Edifice", calling for a new type of government with the basic principle — "Leadership is decisive for the people's destiny!"

But, of course, the "Stahlhelmers" are not nazis. Nor are the gentlemen from "Kyffhaeuserbund", nor are the people from the "Soldatenzeitung" (Soldier's Nnewspaper), nor are the SS men from the HIAG (SS "mutual-aid" organisation in West Germany, trans.) — nor any of the others.

They are all perfectly right. They are not nazis. They are only the dismal mass of petit bourgeois German nationalists, with whom Hitler could do what he wanted. And when Hitler painted a swastika on their helmets they found that quite in order; for Hitler was just a "Nationalist" himself and someone like him is always preferable to a Social Democrat.

In the days of Kaiser Wilhelm II the German nationalists organised the petty bourgeoisie into pan-German military associations, in the days of the Weimar Republic the nationalists used the tough nazi organisations to provide the necessary mass basis. The rebirth of the nationalist organisations, from the "Stahlhelm" and the "Kyffhaeuserbund" to the veterans' associations and reactionary groups, is the real danger which faces us today.

The same process is occurring now as in the Weimar period. History really does repeat itself, at least with us. Let us not be fooled by the variations. Let us stop railing against the neo-nazis! Hitler was the final result of a movement which had been founded much earlier ...

As a matter of fact, we have all been talking about the wrong subject: about the German Reich Party and about the neo-nazis. But we have carefully avoided talking about old-fashioned German nationalism, because its representatives are everywhere — in the schools, administrative offices, universities, the governments, and in the Parliaments. The clever ones are still keeping quiet, the stupid ones are writing articles in "Stahlhelm" and the total idiots are painting swastikas on the walls.

That is why all the government proclamations against the neo-nazis ring so hollow. The whole world knows that it is not a question of the nazis, but of those stubborn German nationalists — so intolerant, hard, industrious, seemingly virtuous and sentimental at the same time, self-pitying, complaining and full of platitudes.

People in other countries distrust these German nationalists because it was they who were responsible for Hitler's rise to power. If we want to win the future, then we must start right here, very thoroughly, with education in the schools and universities.

We are only deceiving ourselves when we talk constantly only about the nazis. We have a bad conscience. Every party has believed that it could win votes by closing an eye here or looking away there. Herr Meier, the SS general, has become a "democrat". Nobody tried to stop the SS convention in Hamlin. Provincial Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament sent greetings to the convention. Did we ourselves protest, or did we demonstrate in opposition? Not a bit of it.

Do Germans really know what the SS means in foreign countries? Do they know that the SS insignia is the symbol for persecution, murder, concentration camps, destruction and ruthlessness? That it does not matter at all whether or not there were any exceptions? And do the old SS men know that they have sacrificed any right to make political claims as an SS group? And do not our democratic parties and organisations know what they are doing when they send greetings to the SS and compete for the favour of these few thousand men? Is our democracy so weak that it cannot get rid of the SS, the "Stahlhelm", the German Reich Party and all the rest of the German folkish band? What is the Bureau for Protection of the Constitution there for, after all? Only to chase Communists?

All-German Olympic Team Named

A joint all-German team for the Winter Olympic Games in Squaw Valley was agreed upon by the Olympic Committees of both German states in an East Berlin meeting on January 23rd. The team will include 34 GDR and 33 West German ski and ice skate aces plus the 17-man West German ice hockey team.

Among the stars are Democratic Germany's speedy cross-country skier Kuno Werner and its top-notch ski jumper Helmut Recknagel, who will carry the team's flag into the California stadium on February 18th.

This joint flag was the main stumbling block in the six month long negotiations to set up a joint team. After a West German government crisis had barely been avoided, both sides agreed on a neutral black-red-gold flag with the five Olympic rings, despite the opposition of Chancellor Adenauer. Other sharp disputes, largely concerning the number of athletes from each side to be on the team, were finally resolved at the final meeting in a markedly friendly atmosphere. This seems to indicate that all remaining problems concerned with the Summer Games in Rome may also be solved satisfactorily.

Berlin-Peking TV Link

Plans were drawn up for a direct TV link between the GDR and China at a conference of the TV networks of the socialist countries held in Budapest at the end of January. At present the East European network, which exchanges programmes of mutual interest, covers Democratic Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Rumania will plug-in to the network in the near future, and the link will be extended at a date not yet announced to China and the other socialist countries of Asia.

The TV network of the socialist countries, known as "Intervision", has already in the past made direct live programme exchanges, mostly of sports events, with "Eurovision", the western European net. An extension of these exchanges is planned for the future.

Asian Visit

A government delegation from Democratic Germany arrived in Rangoon, Burma, on January 29th. The delegation, invited by Trade and Supply Minister U Thi Han, had just visited the socialist Asian countries in China, Mongolia, Korea and Viet Nam. Deputy Prime Minister Heinrich Rau, who is also Minister for Foreign Trade, headed the GDR delegation and important increases in Democratic Germany's trade with Asia, especially China, have been one of the main results of the visits.

63,000 Come East

A total of 63,000 people moved from West Germany to the German Democratic Republic in 1959, it was officially announced in East Berlin. The number, which represented a 17% increase over 1958, included 41,585 returning from West Germany after having spent months or years there as "refugees from the east" and 21,491 West Germans. Of the latter, many were Ruhr miners with their families. Another large group were the young men threatened by West German conscription — about a quarter of the total.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In the past few years, and particularly in the past few weeks, people in all parts of the world have got used to the fact that pretty unbelievable things happen in West Germany, as far as the re-employment of nazi criminals is concerned. But even hardened cynics may be shaken by the news that one of the sadistic criminals who worked as guards in Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp for women is now happily employed in the detective branch of the police in Cologne. Cologne, incidentally, is the city where the recent anti-Semitic outbreak began on Christmas Eve.

The lady in question now goes under her maiden name of Ingeborg Krueger, and is employed by the Cologne police in the rank of Obermeisterin, or sergeant. In the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Ravensbrueck, and Belsen, where she worked during the war, she went under her married name of Ingeborg Sichhardt. When former concentration camp inmates identified her a few weeks ago, they immediately reported the facts to the Cologne police: despite positive identification, she was not removed from her post, but questioners were assured that the case would be "duly investigated".

When I heard of the case I asked the committee of former Ravensbrueck prisoners in Berlin if they had any details of the way in which Ingeborg Krueger had behaved when she was a concentration camp guard.

The committee supplied me with the following details. Hilde Fischer, a former prisoner, reported that Ingeborg Krueger worked as guard in the tailoring department. This department was mainly manned by Polish prisoners, who were periodically dispatched for execution. "When the hour approached for the death candidates to be selected, there was dreadful tension in the tailoring shop" she reported. "When the victims were dragged away, there were frightful scenes, and the guards beat the remaining prisoners and forced them to remain at work. One of the most brutal of these guards was Ingeborg Krueger: at the same time she forced the prisoners to steal cloth for her own private purposes".

Maria Kuhn-Wiedmeier, another prisoner, deposed that Ingeborg Krueger was pretty, and had won the favours of Herr Opitz, the man who ran the SS factories in Ravensbrueck camp. "She was particularly stupid and brutal, constantly beat the prisoners, and reported them for the most minor derelictions. Those prisoners who would not steal for her went in danger of their lives. During the night shifts she forced the prisoners to make her dresses from the stolen cloth: as a result these prisoners could not do their allotted share of the normal work, and were beaten by the other SS guards, but no one dared to explain the reason."

And, as I said at the beginning, this woman is today a police sergeant in the West German city of Cologne.

* * *

Frantic efforts are being made at present to whitewash Professor Theodor Oberlaender, the nasty old nazi who is today Refugee Minister in West Germany: he has himself commissioned a so-called "Union of Resistance Fighters" to investigate his past. Since this organisation is likely to be issuing a "White Book" fairly soon, explaining that Oberlaender is a much maligned man, it may be worth pointing out that this "resistance organisation", known by the initials URPE, is a hole-in-the-wall group which has no connection with any of the big and reputable organisations of those who really fought Hitler. It has in fact less than one hundred members, including a German colonel who served Hitler right up to the end of the war, and is run by a Dutch confidence trickster named Joop Swart, who is married to a lady prominent during the war as an SS propagandist.

On January 15th the newspaper "Vorwaerts", official organ of the West German Social Democrats, pointed out that Swart was reliably reported to have received over £7,500 from West German government funds to carry out the whitewash job on Oberlaender. This should, I feel, make the whole operation rather suspect.

* * *

Over now to quite a different subject. All friends of the theatre in Berlin were saddened and shocked to hear at the end of January that the veteran actor Wolf Beneckendorf had been found murdered in his apartment, apparently the victim of a burglar. Beneckendorf, who was seventy, came of one of the oldest Prussian aristocratic families, and looked it too, with his hawk-like face and his immaculate and rather old-fashioned dress. But unlike most Prussian aristocrats, he became a socialist in his youth, and remained true to his socialist ideals to the last. During the Weimar Republic he was much in demand as a reciter of revolutionary verse at left-wing meetings, and during the nazi period he was forced to emigrate to Switzerland.

After the war he settled in the German Democratic Republic, and appeared in dozens of plays and films, usually in the role of an ageing and slightly dotty aristocrat. I met him for the first time at a party a few days before his death. After a short conversation we drifted apart, and a few minutes later I heard him booming away in his penetrating voice: "For an Englishman that fellow Peet has quite sensible ideas."

The Prussian aristocracy was closely inter-related, and Beneckendorf was a nephew-twice-removed of General Paul von Hindenburg, the reactionary old man who, as German President, appointed Hitler as Chancellor in 1933: On May 1st last year Beneckendorf, as always, was marching in the May Day parade in East Berlin, this time carrying one end of a banner inscribed "Workers of the World Unite". As the column passed through Marx-Engels Square, Beneckendorf was heard to murmur: "If only my uncle Paul could see me now!"

* * *

Some of my readers in the USA, Canada and Britain will know what a "Hootenanny" is — a light-hearted concert of songs from several centuries and just about all countries, where the audience sings along with the performers. The Hootenanny just made its first appearance in a non-English speaking land — it took a large audience in East Berlin by storm on January 28th. They not only sang old and new German songs but did their best with "Down by the Riverside" and other favourites in English and other languages. I even noticed a western newspaperman singing loudly along with the rest.

Lin Jaldati, recently returned from a tour to Britain, sang German, Dutch and Yiddish songs and a Soviet student studying in Berlin came up from the audience and played and sang an Armenian folk-song. The mainspring for this first German Hootenanny was a young Canadian folk-singer called Perry Friedman who is now studying music in East Berlin.

The audience loved the breakaway from stuffed-shirt music traditions and decided unanimously to make the Hootenanny a regular occurrence in Berlin.

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